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A mail-in registration form may be obtained by calling your local county clerk or by picking one up at your local courthouse, public library or other participating government office. Contact the county clerk's office near you to find out which service agencies provide voter registration.

If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Elections Division of the Mississippi Secretary of State:

Mississippi Secretary of State  
P.O. Box 136  
Jackson, MS 39205-0136  
(601) 359-1350 (voice)  
(601) 359-1499 (fax)  
[www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/elections.html](http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/elections.html)

If the Mississippi Secretary of State is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
(202) 307-2767 (voice)  
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)  
(202) 307-3961 (fax)  
[www.usdoj.gov/crt](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt)

*This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.*

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



# Restoring Your Right to Vote



## MISSISSIPPI

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The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

### **What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?**

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

### **Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Mississippi?**

If you are a resident of Mississippi who was convicted of a disqualifying offense, you cannot vote in Mississippi elections. Disqualifying offenses include: murder, rape, bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, bigamy, armed robbery, extortion, felony bad check, felony shoplifting, larceny, receiving stolen property, robbery, timber larceny and the unlawful taking of a motor vehicle. You may continue to vote, however, in federal elections for President and Vice President of the United States as long as you meet the requirements established by Congress for voting in these elections.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Mississippi, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your

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home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

### **I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?**

Your right to vote may be restored by a pardon or an executive order issued by the Governor upon your discharge from probation. Your right to vote may also be restored by a two-thirds vote of the state legislature.

### **What if my conviction was for a federal crime?**

The right to vote in Mississippi is not affected by a federal criminal conviction. If you have not been convicted of any of the disqualifying offenses in a state, county or municipal court of competent jurisdiction in the state of Mississippi, and you are otherwise qualified to vote, you can register to vote.

### **What if I was convicted in another state?**

The right to vote in Mississippi is not affected by a criminal conviction in another state. If you are not under sentence by a Mississippi state court, and you are otherwise qualified to vote in Mississippi, you can register to vote.

### **How do I obtain a pardon or an executive order?**

If you were convicted in Mississippi state court, you can apply to the Governor of Mississippi to seek a pardon or executive order:

Office of the Governor  
Post Office Box 139  
Jackson, MS 39205

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### **What happens if I move to another state?**

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

### **What are Mississippi's other voter registration requirements?**

Every U.S. citizen who possesses the following qualifications is entitled to register to vote in Mississippi:

- an inhabitant of Mississippi, except persons judicially declared mentally incompetent
- at least 18 years old (or will be by the date of the next general election)
- a resident of the state, county, and supervisor's district for 30 days

### **When do I need to register to vote?**

If you register by mail, your application must be postmarked at least 30 days prior to the election in which you want to vote.

If you register in the clerk's office, you must register at least 30 days prior to the election in which you want to vote. In most cases, Circuit Clerks and Municipal Clerks are required to register voters at any time during usual business hours of 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

### **Where do I go to register?**

Registration is available at many places in Mississippi, including:

- your local county or municipal clerk's office
- the Department of Motor Vehicles
- various state agencies
- by mail